



# Women Hope for a Place in President Harding's Cabinet; Way May Be Found in the Creation of a New Department

## Bills Now Before Congress Would Provide Place for a Feminine Secretary

By Hannah Mitchell

STEP by step women are moving toward the higher offices in our government. The creation of a new executive department in the Federal government, the proposed department of social or public welfare, probably will open a place for women in the President's Cabinet.

Mrs. Secretary might then be considered in the line of succession to the Presidency. No provision was made in the Constitution for the President's Cabinet, and consequently nothing is said of the members' succession. The executive departments have been created by acts of Congress under the phrase in the Constitution which says:

### The Succession

"The Congress shall have power . . . to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or office thereof."

In 1886 a law was passed vesting the succession to the Presidency, in the event of the President's and the Vice-President's death or disability, in the Cabinet officers in the order of the creation of their departments.

As the interests of women have become more and more intensive in affairs of government, certain capable members of the sex have been elected or appointed to official positions. With the opening of our next Congress the second woman will take her place as Representative in Congress. She is Miss Alice Robertson, of Oklahoma. The first woman ever elected to Congress in this country was Miss Jeannette Rankin, of Montana.

### Woman's Highest Job

The highest position held by a woman in the Federal government at present is that of Civil Service Commissioner, the place to which Mrs. Helen Hamilton Gardener was appointed last year. Miss Julia Lathrop, as chief of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, has been one of the outstanding examples of the work a woman can do in the business of the government since her appointment to that place in 1912.

In several elections women have run for the United States Senate, but with little success. It would be our prophecy that the higher house of the legislative body of our government will be the last place in the machinery of government to feel the invasion of the newly enfranchised voters, with the exception of the Supreme Court.

In respect to the new Cabinet position, Washington has the notion pretty firmly fixed that a woman will be chosen by President Harding. The remark, wherever ventured concerning the possibility of a woman in the next Cabinet, brought the response:

"Oh, yes, you mean for the new chair of public welfare."

### Representative Women There

According to many of the women in Washington, the whole idea started on Social Justice Day, October 1, in Marion, Ohio, when more than five thousand women greeted Senator Harding. His speech concerning what was called "social justice" contained the nucleus from which the whole movement has grown.

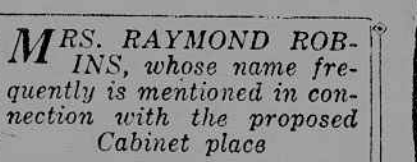
That was before the election, and the women greeting the Republican candidate, while in the main Republicans, were representative of women's interests along the very broadest lines and some of them were women with whom politics was only a secondary interest. Among them were former suffrage workers, busi-

ness women, employers, social workers, teachers and others. They came from all parts of the United States, and they went away greatly inspired with the vision of their next President.

At that time Senator Harding went on record as in favor of a new department in the government, a department which would bear some such name as that of the department of public welfare. Nothing was said about a woman's heading this proposed department. The work



MRS. CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT, leader of the suffragists



MRS. RAYMOND ROBINS, whose name frequently is mentioned in connection with the proposed Cabinet place

with which it should be occupied covered the sort of things in which women had declared themselves interested, but, according to women who made the pilgrimage to the front porch in Marion, the chance of having a woman in the Cabinet did not occur to them.

### Newspapermen Started It

With their tendency to prophesy, however, the newspaper correspondents saw the chance which the women themselves missed. They jumped ahead and declared that such a department as Senator Harding recommended should and probably would have a woman as its chief. And so the idea has grown. The women interested in politics thought well of the newspapermen's idea.

"A woman in the Cabinet? Yes. Why not? The things which this department would handle are the things for which women wanted the right to vote. Who would be better able than a woman to manage the department?" is the way they put it. The next consideration is that of getting a bill passed creating the new department.

As the Cabinet now stands, few, if any, persons have considered the possibility of a woman's being appointed to one of the posts. None of the women leaders has expressed a wish of seeing one of her sex appointed to any of the existing secretariats. Of course, if the Democrats wished to steal a march on the Republicans, and any more resignations are handed to President Wilson, a woman might be slipped into a Cabinet post for the few remaining weeks of this Administration. However, that is beside the point, and beyond probability.

### New Place Proposed

The new department is now under consideration in committees of the United States Senate. A bill proposing a department of public welfare has been introduced by Senator Medill McCormick. It creates a new executive department with a secretary of public welfare who shall be the head thereof, to be appointed by the President, by and with the consent of the Senate. The salary for this office shall be \$12,000 a year, accord-



MRS. MEDILL McCORMICK, presiding over the National Republican Women's Executive Committee



MISS JULIA LATHROP, chief of the Children's Bureau

ing to the bill, and the term and tenure of office shall be like that of the heads of other executive departments.

Certain branches of work which are now included in the work of other departments will be transferred to the new department, if it is established, and the work of many bureaus, commissions and agencies will be put under the same head. As the business of the Federal government has grown certain items have been added to departments where they seem to have little relation to the main work. In some cases duplication and overlapping of work have been found, and the new department would coordinate these branches and do away with the duplication. Senator McCormick's bill would place the following things under the department of public welfare which are now included in other departments:

- FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.
- The Office of Indian Affairs.
  - The United States Indian Service.
  - The Bureau of Penitents.
  - The Bureau of Education.
  - St. Elizabeth's Hospital.
  - Howard University.
  - Freedman's Hospital.
- FROM THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT.
- Bureau of War Risk Insurance.
  - Office of the Surgeon General of Public Health Service.
  - The Public Health Service.
- FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.
- The Children's Bureau.
  - The Women's Bureau.
- Powers Transferred
- The following bureaus, commissions and agencies are abolished and



MRS. JOHN GLOVER SOUTH, of Kentucky, one of the women leaders in the last campaign

their authority, powers and duties conferred and imposed upon bureaus of the new department:

The United States Employees' Compensation Commission.

Federal Board for Vocational Education.

The United States Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board.

National Home for Disabled Soldiers, placed under jurisdiction of department of public welfare.

The authority, duties and powers of the Secretary of the Interior with relation to the Columbia Institution for the Deaf are transferred to the secretary of public welfare.

The bill also says that until other suitable quarters are provided the department of public welfare shall occupy the buildings and premises now occupied by the bureaus, offices and branches of the public service which are by the act transferred to or included in the said department.

### Dividing the Work

Many of the other executive departments of the government have been created in just this way, by taking work away from other departments when it has grown to a size which warranted a place of its own and separate representation in the President's Cabinet.

The first departments were created by an act of Congress in 1789. They were the State Department,

then known as the Department of Foreign Affairs; the Treasury Department and the War Department, which also included the navy. The Attorney General was then part of the judiciary establishment of the government.

### Would Be Twelve Members

With the establishment of the postal system in 1794, the office of Postmaster General was created, but it was not included as a Cabinet post until 1829. In 1798 the navy affairs were separated from the War Department and the Secretary of the Navy became a Cabinet member. In 1849 the Department of Internal Affairs was separated from the State Department and the Secretary of the Interior appointed.

The Department of Agriculture was established in 1889 and that of Commerce and Labor in 1903. In 1913 the work of the latter was divided and the Department of Labor became a separate entity.

As the Cabinet now stands there are ten secretaries of departments. With the acceptance of Mr. Coolidge to sit with the President's executive advisers and the creation of a new secretaryship, President Harding's Cabinet would number twelve.

If, when the new department is

created, President Harding appoints a woman to the place, she will find strong supporters in her work and the President will find hearty approval in general of the move in official and unofficial Washington.

In discussing the prospect of a woman Cabinet member with Senator Lenroot last week we found him, as usual, completely up to date and in sympathy with giving this new responsibility and honor to a woman.

"There are women who would make splendid Cabinet members," he said. "Of course, I am not in favor of the appointment of a woman to the Cabinet simply to represent women. But in the consideration of women capable of holding the office—and, as I said, I know women who would make splendid Cabinet officers—it should not be an objection that they are women."

Senator Wadsworth does not favor the indiscriminate appointment of women to Cabinet offices, but the proposed department is another matter.

### Wadsworth Approves

"I should not favor the appointment of a woman to any of the posts in the Cabinet as it now stands," he said, "but for the head of a new department, such as the proposed department of public welfare, I think a woman might very well be chosen. There are women perfectly equipped for such a place."

One of the first moves toward consolidating legislation relating to public works and benefits was made in the amendment to the Maternity and Infancy Care bill, which passed the Senate a week ago Saturday. In the draft of the bill as introduced the work of dispensing funds and

## Political Gossips Are Busy With the Names of Those Who Are Considered Eligible

benefits to the several states for care of mothers and babies was vested in what was called a Federal board of maternal and infant hygiene. Under an amendment introduced by Senator Smoot the responsibility for execution of the provisions of the act was placed with the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor. If the new department is established, as planned by Senator McCormick's bill, this work will come under the jurisdiction of the department.

judge fairly and promptly as to their good faith and competency, and thus insure the integrity of his bureaus.

### A Political Job

"The head of a department is a supporter of the Administration which appoints him—legitimately political. Therefore, he should know his country as a whole—that is, he ought not to be provincial, whether of the East or the West or the Middle West, North or South. No secretary can do his work well who does not know the other countries of the world well enough to understand their policies and the trend of their civilizations in a general way.

"If these qualities are needed, though perhaps not always found, in men they are more needed in the first woman secretary, who must work harder and do more in order to succeed. I need not say that at present an honest purpose to aid just industrial and economic progress in the United States ought to be the basis in any one entrusted with governmental responsibility.

"Simple good manners and the respect for the public which supposedly lie behind them are an advantage, technically and morally.

"Women are individuals and must be chosen as such and tested by all the rules of the game without favor. No one can say with safety what activities are peculiarly suited to women, because, like other human beings, women differ."

### Responsibility to Her Sex

It seems to us that one very important point is brought out in this, the responsibility to her sex of the woman who shall be the first to serve as a Cabinet officer. The very fact that she is an innovation will make her responsibility twice as great. She will carry not only the burden of her official duties, she will carry the burden of making good for the women who come after her in public office.

Nearly every one has a candidate for the prospective new place in the Cabinet. Among many of the suffragists there is a feeling that their leader is one of the most capable persons who could be selected for the post. Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt's name is associated with the work of women and the progress of suffrage in nearly every mind in the country. Her place and her ability as an executive are undisputed and speak for themselves. And there is, besides her suffrage work, her leadership among women in war time as chairman of the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense.

### Mrs. Robins Has Friends

Because of her great activities in social welfare work Mrs. Raymond Robins is the candidate of some of the women. She has had experience as an executive and has been active in work for the Republican party, as one of the Republican women's executive committee. Mrs. Medill McCormick is another of the Republican women who have proved themselves both in the work for the party and in social work. She has a genius for politics, both inherited and the result of long association with political circles.

Women in different parts of the West have suggested Miss Jeannette Rankin and Mrs. Harriet Taylor Upton. Miss Rankin has had one place as "the first woman," and although there are many who disagree with her political moves she represented her sex most creditably as a person. Mrs. Upton came to the front as a strong worker in the Republican campaign. She has long been known in suffrage circles and as a clubwoman and is very popular with women who have worked with her.

If the new department is established the appointment of an executive will lie with President Harding. As with the suggestions for heads of other departments, the next President will probably find himself overwhelmed with advice from every part of the country. And probably the prophecies as to who the woman Cabinet member will be of about as much value as those made about the Republican nominee. We do not pretend to have the sagacity of a Mr. Daugherty.



MRS. HARRIET TAYLOR UPTON, active both in politics and women's club work

ment of public welfare, since the Children's Bureau will be under that department.

### Women's First Bill

Mrs. Maud Wood Park, chairman of the National League of Women Voters and formerly chairman of the Congressional Committee of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, expressed herself as favorable to a woman in the President's Cabinet. Mrs. Park's chief interest of the last month has been the matter of getting this bill on maternity and infant hygiene through Congress. It was the first expression of a nation-wide group of women since the women had the right of suffrage.

"I should be glad to see a woman appointed to a Cabinet position," said Mrs. Park. "Her qualifications for the office should be, in the first place, character, in the large sense. She should have judgment and command respect. Her previous experience should have been along executive lines and whatever special training the office to which she was appointed called for."

### Without Regard to Sex

Jeannette Rankin, now field secretary for the National Consumers' League, is working for the measures with which the new department would be concerned.

"I hope the day will come when we will not discuss whether there are women in the Cabinet," said Miss Rankin, while discussing the desirability of a woman Cabinet member. "I hope the time will come when officers will be chosen solely for their qualifications, without regard for their sex."

In this matter of qualifications we have a definition of those for a Cabinet member given to us by an officeholder whose name we must withhold. Much as we should like to take the definition to ourselves, we must acknowledge the debt, though thus unsatisfactorily to our readers: "The head of every department has many special pieces of work under him, often singularly unrelated, and, of course, he cannot know scientifically about all or perhaps any of them. He needs, therefore, to know about people, so that he can